2: Skreforud M-S (1870-1871) 1942 AW42 Santal AW42

584 787 axe, firewood on a woman's head, a snake or a jackal crossing the road in front of them, it is a bad omen, and they return home. But if they, within the boundary of their own village, or of the girl's village, see a full vessel, a cow, a new earthenware vessel, a pack bullock, or the footmarks of a tiger, these are excellent omens[2] for them; therefore they go in to the Jog Mañjhi of the girl's village. (This in connexion with omens is nowadays only custom, because the boy's father tells the village headman in advance, viz., on such and such a day we shall, in the early morning, go to have a look at a vessel; warn the people of the village that they must not at that time touch anything that will hinder. The marriage-broker also tells the headman of the girl's village that the people of his village may behave in the same way.)

584 The marriage-broker says to the Jog Mañjhi: We have come to see a vessel; you, please, show us this piec'. The Jog Mañjhi then goes to the house of the girl's father and tells them: The friends have come. They reply: Very well. Then the Jog Mañjhi says to the girl: Come a couple of you girls to our house; some visitors have come to us; you pour out water[3] for them, we have no one to do it. The girl's parents then say to their daughter: Do go, girl. Then some three girls go; when they arrive there they go round and bow to all who are gathered. The girl concerned keeps her place as the middle one of the three, in order not to be ashamed. The marriage-broker then whispers to the boy's parents, saying: Look at the one in the middle. When they have greeted all, the girls will stand there for a moment and then go home. When they have left, the Jog Mañjhi asks the marriage-broker: Well, how is it? Are you satisfied or not? The visitors answer: Yes, it is all right, so far as we are concerned; we are pleased; the question is whether they also will be pleased.

The Jog Mañjhi then goes to the home of the girl's parents, who ask him: How is it, Jog Mañjhi, what did the friends say? Are they pleased or not? The Jog Mañjhi replies: The friends have said it is all right, they are pleased. The girl's father then says to the Jog Mañjhi: Please, bring the friends here, they must drink some water before they leave. The Jog Mañjhi returns to his own house and says to the visitors: Please, Sir Marriage-Broker, the friends are calling us, we shall drink some water before leaving. The young man's party say: No, not so, it is well as it is; shall we not drink later on? Surely we shall. If the girl's father has brewed beer or something, the Jog Mañjhi speaks earnestly to them: Come along, you need not sit down, I shall not keep you for many moments. They consequently understand that they have brewed beer; then they go. The Jog Mañjhi takes them along. The girls are there. As soon as the visitors arrive, they, i. e., the girls, bring them bedsteads, stools, pieces of wood to sit on. Pouring out water for them they again salute them. When this is done, the girl's parents greet the

[2] Omens seem to be paid less attention to now than formerly; Kolean's remarks, put within parentheses, are significant. [3] Visitors from a distance get their feet washed. It is an act of courtesy.

[178] [787] [576]

2: Skrefarud M-5 (1870-1871) 1942 AW42 Santal AW42

k. Concerning mutual behaviour and respect.

At the time when we were boys, all members of a family living in the same village greeted each other in the morning, as soon as they got up, and the people in the village also greeted each other when they met, and when members of a family go anywhere on a visit or come back, then also they greet each other. And when the young people of a village go to attend a festival, they bow to the Mạńjhi haṛam and Mạńjhi buḍhi (the village headman and his wife), when they leave. In the house the master and his wife once daily are sure to kiss their sons and daughters-in-law, big or small. The young men and girls all honour the old men and ladies much. What these say to instruct or exhort them, this they fix in their mind. They are not impudent towards old men and women; in their presence they do not sit down on a bedstead even; young men and girls do not drink beer or liquor; the young men do not go to a place where an ox is eaten either. Women pay much heed to what the men say; they do not let their hair down in the presence of men. The village people honour the village headman and his deputy much, and these two also do not neglect what the village people say.

Nowadays the age has been spoilt. The women do not honour the men; the sons do not respect their old fathers either; daughters are also very impudent towards their mothers; they do not greet each other either; they pass each other like animals; the young men and girls drink an awful amount of beer; when old men come, they do not get up either; when old men or the parents upbraid them, the young men and girls answer back, or they run away in the sulks, and only when coaxed a good deal, will they come back home. The women and the children have become the kings in this age. Some few people are good even at the present time; but most people have become bad. The village headmen also judge covetously (taking bribes), and the village people do not follow the headman's order either. Also co-parents-in-law are quarrelling a good deal in the present age; formerly they never quarrelled, they were very respectful towards each other. The ancestors said: "Rice like flowers, curry like fish, liquor like fire, and a friend like a co-parent-in-law, where will you find such a one?"

l. Concerning friendship.

Living in the same village all are relatives, quite so; but there is not friendship with all there. In a village many people are on friendly terms with each other, and some people also are on good terms with each other, but friendship they have only with one or two others, and intimate friendship they have only one with one other, and this is very rarely found. Intimate friends will give even their life to help each other in calamity and danger. People who are intimate friends tell each other the sorrows and joys of their heart, and in all matters they help each other, when there is any necessity. In the village elderly men

3t Mukherjea O, Y-4,5 (ca. 1933-1939) 1962
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Relationship by courtesy

i. Flower friendship

Santal girls enter into various artificial relationship with their friends and address them with the endearing names of many flowers and leaves. At some places, such friendships are called *Phul Patao* which follows a regular ceremony, when two girls of the same mental, if not chronological age, pledge themselves to a friendship till death does them part. The main events of such ceremonies consist in mutual presents of clothes, and merry feasts. The final knot is tied when the two friends stick a particular flower in the hair of each other. Henceforth the friends will address each other by their flower-names e.g., *Akar Baba* (a flower of a plant found in moist places, *Limnophila*, Roxburghiana, G. Don), *Keya phul* (a flower), *Karam phul*, *Karam Dàr* (the branch of a Karam tree), instead of their own names. Such friendships, very common in Bengal, have their prototypes among the Santals, for, we hear, they have such names for friends as *Gònga Jal* (the water of the Ganges). Enquiries revealed that men rarely enter into such ties and they are more common among the women-folk, who, sometimes even choose such friends from non-Santals.

ii. Between neighbours

A variant of such relationship, called *Nata*, is sometimes adopted between neighbours to pay

3i Mukherjea O. Y-4, 6 (ca. 1933-1939) 1902
AW42 Santal AW42

576 sufficient respect to superiors or to show a corresponding affection to juniors, as would be proper in a common fraternity in the clan. Thus a younger [601] man addresses an elder as 'uncle' and a younger girl will choose to call a senior woman as 'elder sister.'

iii. Between mothers

572 An interesting tie is knit by Santal society between the mothers of an equal number of children. [596] Ceremonials are gone through to establish such [431] forms of friendship, called *Sàika*, when presents are [594] mutually exchanged and each of the friends treats some guests at feasts as a mark of the occasion.

3t Mukherjea O. Y-4,5 (ca. 1933-1939) 1902
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584 the locality. If they hit upon any, they will now make enquiries and if they think her a proper mate for the youth, will inform the Headman of the girl's village about the desires of the youth's father. These talks generally emanate from the bridegroom's side, the opposite party does not make the first advances. Now, if the girl's father agrees to talk over the proposal, a discussion of their clans and sub-clans and the other prohibited degrees follow, so that the marriage may not infringe the tribal laws. If these are found to be satisfactory enough, the youth's father will be informed when he may see the girl.

Omen Reading

584 787 574 Now, when the youth's father starts with a party on the day appointed, they will drop the journey and the marriage proposal, if they see a cart carrying fuel or a jackal passing from their right to left or a man carrying an axe or a *Kuḍi* (an implement for digging earth) or even receive the news of the death of a cow. But should they receive obituary notices of a man on reaching the girl's village, they will think the youth a lucky fellow, as on such journeys the intelligence of a man's death is the best possible omen.

584 574 [576] Now, they assemble at the house of the village Headman and after profuse salutations refresh themselves. The girl will now find herself escorted to

Jt Mukherjea C. Y-4, 5 (ca. 1933-1939) 1932
AW42 Santal AW42
MAYURBHANJ

224 782 In the alternative, the hunters may simply ask the Headman to invoke the Hill-god to look to the welfare of the tribe during the hunt.

224 834 784 As regards special rules to be observed before the hunting, it may be noted that men who will hunt, sleep separately from their wives and do not have sexual intercourse on the night previous to the hunting. On the day fixed for the excursion, the hunters do not apply oil on their heads or eat meat or fish or come in contact with women who have menstruated whose very touch is thought to defile the food or the clothes of the hunters.

224 [515] When the hunting party returns to the village, the feet of the hunters are washed with great delight by the women and oil is rubbed on the tired legs. All these conclude with the customary [576] salutations called *Johor* and *do god*, the former being adopted by women who are superiors in age and relationship and the latter, being a prostration by the juniors.

224 693 533 539 We would like to conclude this short review with a folk-song which describes the agony of a Santal wife while her husband is out hunting:

Baba hak najòmcò.
Baba sòbòd na jòmcò.
Baba lota dak' dògo sepeindaramlet.
Bàhu nalòmraga, bàhu nalòmhòmòra,
Bàhu hòpòn badal go bàhu hòpòn menak'ko.

Ao

585 Then on the appointed day the bridegroom with the bariatko (friends, relatives and villagers) starts for the bride's house in the afternoon. When they reach the village of the bride, they wait outside the village in a field, and they are cordially welcomed by the bride's father and relatives. Dancing and music were already going on there, tum tums, madals and cymbals being beaten more than ever. The bride wearing a new cloth stands a little apart by the side of the bridegroom. [593] The bridegroom's younger brother, an important personage in the scene, stands on his left side and the whole party stands on the road just at the entrance to the village. A large crowd of village females, each bearing a brass basin containing a lump of coarse molasses and a lota filled with water stand there. [576] Upon the usual greetings being offered which consist of all bending down respectfully and touching the ankles of the happy group, the elder women step forward and each in turn taking a large pinch from the molasses thrusts it first into the bride's mouth with her fingers and thumb, after which she holds the lota of water for the bride to drink from and then pours a little of the water over her feet. The same ceremony is performed on the bridegroom and his brother. The dancing and music are kept up without cessation during this performance and many torches are also lit. [593] [604] After this, three women—the mother, the elder aunt and the younger aunt of the bride—come out of the crowd and take the bridegroom, his brother and the bride away with them into the village followed by other attendant girls and women who amuse themselves with cutting jokes on the blushing bride. All then proceed

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husbands are strenuously resisted by the Santals, and the fact that the civil courts administer the Hindu laws of succession leads to many cases of tension. In practice, certain rights are conceded to women for "humanitarian" reasons. To daughters who do not marry—a rare but not unknown phenomenon—and to widows, with or without children, the right to maintenance is given. Since the woman on marriage becomes a member of another clan, the succession to land cannot be carried through her.

Ties of kinship determine standards of behaviour to a great extent. Life in community is an art to be learnt, and the Santal has his own rigid standards of right conduct. The relationship between grandparents and grandchildren is one of deep intimacy and affection, which is no doubt fostered by the necessity for leaving the young children with the grandparents when both parents have to go out to work. The rules governing familiarity and its converse, avoidance, are based on kinship ties. The joking relationship, apart from grandparents and grandchildren, extends to his wife's younger sisters for a man and to her husband's younger brothers and her elder sister's husband for a woman. People within the circle of this relationship can talk freely with one another, indulging in jokes and calling each other names. Conversely, extreme care is called for in relationships which do not fall within this circle. A Santal child must behave with great respect to anyone who belongs to the same generation as his parents. Names are sparingly used between individuals, and relationship terms are the usual form of address. Husband and wife will on no account use each other's names, in distinction from the Hindu taboo, which is enjoined on the wife only. They behave circumspectly towards each other in public. A woman has to carry herself with care before her husband's elder brother. Her dress must at all times be properly arranged in front of him; she cannot sit with her legs dangling over the edge of a bed or the low veranda running round the house, her hair must be arranged, and she does not talk to him at all apart from the necessities of daily life. The rules extend to the finer forms of courtesy. Every Santal knows what is expected of him when he is meeting relatives—whether he has to make a deep obeisance to the ground before the person he has met, or whether he should wait for the other person to greet him first and then acknowledge the greeting by cupping his hands together and raising them towards his chest. A greeting between equals is performed by means of a

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salute with the right hand; this is raised towards the face, fingers slightly bent, the fingers of the left hand lightly touching the right forearm. When a Santal is meeting his co-parents-in-law, they embrace breast to breast, exchange jokes, and make use of the inclusive form of the dual pronoun. Honoured guests as well as relations are met with dignified courtesy. Few experiences can be more refreshing than to sit in the courtyard of a Santal home after a long and dusty walk. When greetings have been exchanged, one of the girls of the house comes forward to wash the feet and massage with oil the tired calves. This done, tobacco encased in the rolled leaf of the *sal* tree is offered and gratefully accepted.

Addendum to Chapter I

The following figures for the distribution of Santals have been taken from the Statistical Tables of the *Census Report of India*, 1931. Unfortunately, the figures for 1941 do not distinguish Santals from other primitive tribes, district by district.

Bihar and Orissa			*Bengal*		
Monghyr	..	26,742	Burdwan	..	101,522
Santal Parganas		754,804	Birbhum	..	64,079
Hazaribagh	..	129,103	Bankura	..	114,577
Manbhum	..	284,315	Midnapur	..	169,750
Orissa States	..	278,284	Rajshahi	..	25,591
Bhagalpur	..	30,791	Dinajpur	..	130,328
Purnea ..	..	46,905	Jalpaiguri	..	27,859
Balasore ..	..	15,444	Rangpur	..	7,410
Singhbhum	..	108,890	Malda ..	..	72,145
			Hooghly ..	..	38,013
			Murshidabad	..	22,725

(Districts from which only a few Santals were returned have been omitted above.)

In Assam, 101,949 persons were returned as Santali speakers.

The numerical and proportionate distribution of the population in the Bankura district was given as follows:

Total primitive tribes	.. ..	139,063, 12% of the total
Hindus ..	.. ..	920,456, 83% of the total

(Of the Hindus, 102,939 were Brahmin, while 353,675 were recorded as belonging to the Depressed Classes.)